

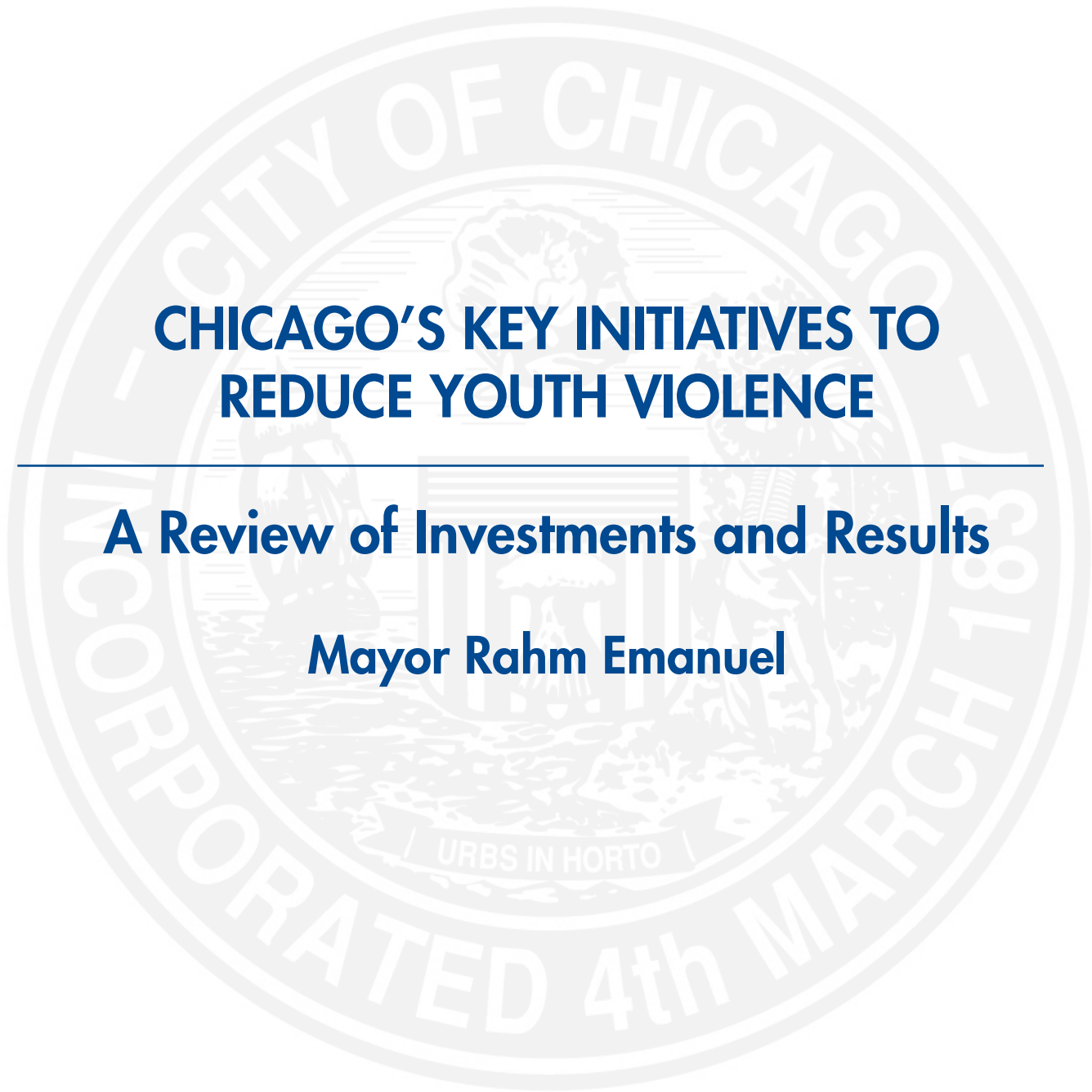


# **CHICAGO'S KEY INITIATIVES TO REDUCE YOUTH VIOLENCE**

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**A Review of Investments and Results**

**Mayor Rahm Emanuel**



## INTRODUCTION

Since assuming office three years ago, Mayor Rahm Emanuel has made reducing youth violence a top goal of his administration. To achieve this goal, the administration has taken a multi-disciplinary approach by coordinating the work of the Chicago Police Department, Department of Family and Support Services, Chicago Public Schools, Chicago Department of Public Health, and the Chicago Park District – as well as with county partners – to address youth violence from every possible angle.

Over the past two years, the City has built on this work by significantly increasing investments in evidence-based violence prevention programs, strategic policing, and school-based reforms. The City's strategy has focused on the following key goals:

1. Expand mentoring, jobs and other opportunities for youth, including youth at high risk for becoming involved in violence
2. Adopt school-based reforms to reduce violence by reconnecting high-risk youth to school, adopting a restorative approach to student misconduct, and creating safer, calmer school environments
3. Implement strategic policing to swiftly respond to and de-escalate potentially violent conflict among youth
4. Establish strong support services for youth leaving the justice system and returning to their communities
5. Empower communities to play an active role in preventing violence
6. Rigorously evaluate initiatives to inform future program design and investment

Combined, this strategy has had a significant impact on youth violence:

- Citywide shooting incidents involving victims of all ages were **down 24% in 2013**, compared to 2012.
- Shooting incidents involving victims ages 16 and younger were **down 40% in 2013** compared to 2012 and down 35% compared to 2011.
- Shooting incidents involving CPS-enrolled students are **down 44% this school year** compared to the same time period last school year.<sup>1</sup>

While Chicago is making important progress toward reducing youth violence, the City will not rest until every young person in Chicago feels the same sense of security. We will continue to pursue the strategies outlined in this document while evaluating where we can grow and improve.

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<sup>1</sup> To date, no shooting has occurred on a CPS school campus since the beginning of the administration  
Data pulled on January 21, 2014

## **Goal 1: Expand mentoring, jobs and other opportunities for youth**

During the transition to the new administration, many youth and community leaders expressed a need for safe alternatives for young people to develop skills and play in their neighborhoods. Over the past two years, Chicago has dramatically increased its investment in programs designed to prevent youth from becoming involved in violence by providing those safe alternatives. Some programs are specifically designed to reach high-risk youth and others expand opportunities for all youth in Chicago.

### **For high-risk youth, the City has made the following investments:**

- Dedicated an additional \$2 million in the evidence-based mentoring program “Becoming a Man – Sports Edition,” which has **reduced violent arrests for participants by over 40%.**
- Integrated trauma-sensitive care in every City-funded youth program. In 2013, 100 youth workers were trained in trauma-based practices. **In 2014, the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) will train workers at all of the City’s 212 youth programs.** DFSS will also provide training on evidence-based interventions to 20 youth agencies who deliver in-depth counseling to youth and families.
- Launched first of its kind summer program for justice-involved youth. In 2013, One Summer Chicago Plus (OSC+) connected 1,000 at-risk youth to mentoring, cognitive behavioral therapy, and a full-time job. In 2012, when compared to similarly at-risk youth who did not join the program, participants were **51% less likely to be arrested for a violent crime.**<sup>iii</sup> In 2014, the City will double its investment in OSC+ from \$1.5 million to \$3 million—increasing the number of City – funded OSC+ slots from 500 to 1,000.
- Partnered with City leaders to create Chicago’s Public Safety Action Committee, which is poised to be one of the nation’s largest public/private partnerships to reduce violence among high-risk youth. The Mayor joined Tom Wilson, Chairman and CEO of Allstate, and Jim Reynolds, Chairman and CEO of Loop Capital, to launch a \$50 million, five-year initiative that invests in programs, systems, and policies that are designed to prevent violence. All programs funded by the PSAC will be rigorously evaluated to build a knowledge base that policy makers and philanthropies can use to effectively target funding to programs that have the largest impact on violence for the greatest population of youth.

### **For all youth, the City:**

- Expanded City investment despite federal cuts. Mayor Emanuel has expanded the number of job and after school opportunities since taking office even as Chicago has lost more than \$11 million in federal funds for after school and summer programs. In 2014, the City will invest more than \$31 million to provide 31,000 youth with after school opportunities, summer jobs, and special violence prevention programs. This represents a 27% increase in the number of youth served over 2013.
- Increased after-school funding by 25%. Mayor Emanuel’s 2014 budget contains \$13 million in funding for afterschool opportunities for nearly 16,000 kids. This represents a 25 percent increase in funding since Mayor Emanuel took office in 2011, allowing the City to serve 3,000 more children.
- Will create summer jobs for 22,000 Youth. The City will partner with Cook County, and the State of Illinois to provide 22,000 summer jobs through the One Summer Chicago program, a 10% increase over 2013. This overall number includes 12,000 City-funded jobs thanks to a \$14.5 million investment in the Mayor’s 2014 budget.

## Goal 2: Adopt school-based reforms to reduce violence

Providing a quality education for all students and increasing graduation rates are critical components of the Mayor's comprehensive strategy to reduce youth violence. Through a coordinated effort between the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and the Chicago Police Department (CPD), the strategy is twofold: (1) reconnect high-risk youth to their schools and put them back on a path toward graduation and (2) create safer, more positive learning environments for all students.

### **To reconnect high-risk youth to school:**

- Since the 2010-2011 school year, **CPS has created over 3,500 additional seats for alternative, nontraditional learning environments** to engage the hardest to reach youth and put them on a path to success. In the coming school year, CPS is on-track to nearly double the number of available seats. CPS increased seats available in neighborhoods with the greatest need and engaged the community to help identify disengaged youth.
- Launched three new student re-engagement centers to help connect students who recently dropped out to educational opportunities. This school year the **re-engagement centers have created 700 individual success and graduation plans** for students. Over **50% of these students** have either re-engaged or are on track to re-engage with school this coming year.
- Launched new \$2 million tutoring program aimed at improving graduation rates and reducing violence involvement for the highest-risk youth. The Match Tutoring program will connect nearly 700 at-risk students, many of whom participate in BAM, with intensive one-on-one math tutoring to get students back on track. Early results are promising, as students have **seen a drop in student misconducts by 67%.**<sup>IV</sup>
- Expanded a promising pilot program called "Check and Connect" to reduce truancy and dropout rates, improve academic achievement and increase school completion among chronically-truant elementary and middle school students.
  - The Check & Connect program provides 500 students in grades 1-7 who are at-risk for school disengagement with one-on-one mentoring, monitoring, and support for learning at home. The program also forms stronger connections between parents and their child's school.
  - This pilot is undergoing a gold-standard randomized evaluation to fully understand how effective the pilot is for elementary and middle school students.
  - The Check & Connect pilot has been adapted from Minneapolis' Check & Connect initiative, an evidence-based intervention that's proven to improve graduation rates and school engagement among truant 9th grade students.
  - Reducing chronic truancy is critical to improving academic outcomes and reducing the risk of violence involvement for disconnected youth.

CPS has moved towards a more holistic approach to safety. This approach includes the development and implementation of prevention strategies that will address behavioral issues on the front end—before they lead to more serious misconduct, keeping students in school and promoting positive behaviors. CPS has moved away from a culture of zero tolerance to one that is built upon student engagement and support.

## To create safer, more positive learning environments for all students, CPS has:

- Instituted a reformed student code of conduct at CPS that focuses on restorative, instructive, and corrective approaches to misconduct. The new code has led to a **16.5% decrease in out of school suspensions in high schools**.
- Integrated social emotional learning into standard curriculum for students K-12. The curriculum helps students develop the social and emotional skills to be successful in school and reduce anger and other impulsive behavior that can lead to violence.
- Improved CPS security staff training by instituting mandatory training for over 1,000 school-based officers that focused on improved student relationships, de-escalation, non-physical interventions and restorative approaches to handling situations. Ongoing training is provided throughout the year.
- Expanded the successful Safe Passage program. CPS partners with community-based organizations to staff routes where students walk to school with safe passage workers. The expanded program added 53 new routes for a total of 91 routes impacting over 30,000 students. Since 2011, **the Safe Passage program has reduced student incidents including misconducts and conflicts at program schools by 27%**.
  - In addition, last year the City heavily invested in infrastructure improvements to make routes safer including:
    - Securing and/or demolishing over 460 buildings
    - Cleaning over 8,300 vacant lots
    - Removing 3,350 instances of graffiti
    - Replacing and repairing 811 street lights

## **Goal 3: Implement strategic policing to swiftly respond to violence and interrupt violent social networks**

Over the last two years, the Chicago Police Department (CPD) has implemented strategic policing initiatives to focus its resources on the highest-crime locations and the individuals at highest risk of becoming involved in violence. The Department's comprehensive strategy includes putting additional officers in high-crime areas, using intelligence to prevent retaliatory gang shootings, moving officers from administrative positions back to the streets, and partnering with the community. Among the Chicago Police Department's initiatives focused solely on youth are the following:

- Expanded Chicago's Gang School Safety Teams (GSST), which are a coordinated effort between CPD and CPS to monitor gang conflicts inside schools and on social media and to proactively de-escalate and prevent retaliatory violence. Since the pilot started in 2010, GSST has expanded to 35 high schools. When a young person is the victim of violence, CPD works with CPS to notify the principal at the youth's school. Within 24 hours, GSST officers go to the school and work alongside school officials to discourage the victim's associates from participating in any retaliatory violence that may happen after school in the surrounding neighborhood.
- In 2013, CPD partnered with Hartgrove Hospital to proactively respond to youth on the west side who are violating curfew. CPD launched a curfew pilot program with Hartgrove Hospital in police districts 10, 11, 15 and 25 to provide an alternative approach of responding to loitering and curfew violations and to provide community support.

Hartgrove Hospital receives curfew reports, makes calls or sends letters to the family and eventually meets with curfew violators and their families to offer resources, refer them to community agencies and provide educational information about the consequences of their behavior.

#### **Goal 4: Establish strong support services for youth leaving the justice system and returning to their communities**

Last fall, Chicago launched a first of its kind juvenile aftercare program called Bridges and Pathways, which will provide wraparound emotional, educational, and employment supports for youth leaving state-run facilities. Justice-involved youth transitioning back to their communities will be connected to:

- A multi-component pilot with the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice that provides intensive case management, online education, social emotional learning/cognitive behavioral therapy and job skill development.
- Alternative educational pathways to support youth completion of high school diploma or equivalent and engage in post-secondary opportunities.
- Opportunities to have paid employment and develop work readiness skills.

#### **Goal 5: Empower communities to play an active role in preventing violence**

Research has shown that a critical predictor of neighborhood level violent crime is “Collective Efficacy,”<sup>v</sup> the level of mutual trust among neighbors and their ability to work together on behalf of the common good for their block. Community policing strategies are designed to help build collective efficacy, and Chicago continues to pioneer in this field. The City:

- Launched an initiative called “Strong Blocks,” designed to empower residents to take back their communities after the police department removes a gang or drug network. Over the past two years, CPD has completed 47 gang or narcotics “takedowns,” removing criminal elements from certain city blocks. In the wake of those operations, CPD community policing officers (CAPS) worked hand-in-hand with community members to form block clubs and convene community meetings attended by 2,011 neighborhood residents. In advance of those meetings, City agencies completed 9,101 resident requests for broken street lights, graffiti and trash removal, and other items in those areas.
- Worked with community leaders in 11 neighborhoods to form “CARE Community Collaboratives.” These community steering committees are charged with establishing a strategic plan to improve public safety in their own neighborhoods whether through expanding summer jobs programs, forming block clubs, or working with the City and CPD to shut down problem businesses.
- Created the “Force for Good Initiative,” a program by the Chicago Police Department to help build the capacity of promising community organizations to deploy effective violence prevention and collective efficacy programming in the highest risk communities across the city. Thirty-one organizations have graduated from the program and 23 organizations have already enrolled in the second class of the 15-month training program.

- In partnership with the National Safe Start Center, the Chicago Department of Public Health sponsored the 7th annual “Childhood Exposure to Violence,” a week-long campaign to promote awareness, encourage dialogue and build skills that help prevent early childhood exposure to trauma. This year’s campaign included a city-wide youth art-show featuring 70 works that focused on the impact of violence in their communities; a webinar, and 4 parent and community events to discuss the subject of childhood exposure to violence, and effective ways for preventing it at home.

## **Goal 6: Rigorously evaluate initiatives to inform future program design and investment.**

The City has opened up access to data and partnered with world-class academic institutions, including University of Chicago’s Crime Lab, the Illinois Institute of Technology, Harvard University and Yale University to help design and evaluate its programs.

- The rigorous evaluation standards that the City put in place has provided robust evidence that connecting high-risk youth with cognitive behavioral therapy, mentoring, and trauma informed care reduces their risk for involvement in violent crime.
- Lessons from the BAM evaluation informed the design of One Summer Chicago Plus (OSC+) a first of its kind summer program designed specifically for justice involved youth. OSC+ gives justice-involved youth opportunities for employment, mentoring and social and emotional learning experiences.
- The evaluation of OSC+ in 2012, the first randomized control trial of a summer jobs program in nearly half a century in the US, found that participants were 51% less likely to be arrested for violent crime.
- In the coming year, CPS “Check and Connect” and Match tutoring programs will be subjected to gold standard, randomized evaluations.

<sup>1</sup>[http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/mayor/press\\_room/press\\_releases/2013/february\\_2013/mayor\\_emanuel\\_announcesadditionalinvestmentinsuccessfulprogramst.html](http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/mayor/press_room/press_releases/2013/february_2013/mayor_emanuel_announcesadditionalinvestmentinsuccessfulprogramst.html)

<sup>2</sup> BAM—SPORTS EDITION. P.7 (research and policy brief., University of Chicago Crime Lab, 2012), [http://crimelab.uchicago.edu/sites/crimelab.uchicago.edu/files/uploads/BAM\\_FINAL\\_Research\\_and\\_Policy\\_Brief\\_20120711.pdf](http://crimelab.uchicago.edu/sites/crimelab.uchicago.edu/files/uploads/BAM_FINAL_Research_and_Policy_Brief_20120711.pdf)

<sup>3</sup>Short Term Results of the One Summer Plus 2012 Evaluation. P.1 (executive summary., University of Chicago Crime Lab, 2013), <http://crimelab.uchicago.edu/sites/crimelab.uchicago.edu/files/uploads/Plus%20results%20brief%20FINAL%2020130802.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> <http://news.uchicago.edu/article/2013/05/14/uchicago-evaluate-effects-increased-math-tutoring-chicago-public-schools>  
Maxwell et al. Collective Efficacy and Criminal Behavior in Chicago, 1995-2004. 2011.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/235154.pdf>

